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Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report every 90 days on its implementation. The report provides an update and analysis of the conflict, the political situation and the operational environment in Darfur, including the main challenges to the effective implementation of the mandate during the period from 16 March to 7 June 2017. It also presents the progress UNAMID has made in the implementation of its benchmarks and provides an update on the transfer of tasks to the United Nations Country Team and the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID.

II. Conflict dynamics and security situation

2. During the reporting period, the level of armed hostilities in Darfur remained significantly lower than in previous years. The non-signatory armed movements attempted to reassert their military presence in Darfur, but remained unable to conduct sustained operations in the face of the military dominance of the Government of the Sudan. In response to intercommunal conflict during the migration season, state and local governments and community leaders, supported by UNAMID, undertook preventive and mitigation measures, resulting in a lower level of violence as compared with previous years. However, the root causes of such disputes, as they relate to the ownership of and access to land and other resources, remained unresolved. Civilians and internally displaced persons were exposed to physical attacks, most often by armed militia and government security personnel. Despite an overall improvement in security conditions as compared with one year ago, the lack of significant progress towards effectively addressing the root causes and consequences of the conflict, especially with respect to the issue of land and presence of armed militias, prevented the further stabilization of the situation in Darfur.

Fighting between forces of the Government of the Sudan and armed movements

3. For the first time since the outbreak of the conflict in 2003, the annual dry season in Darfur witnessed only one major and a few minor military confrontations between government and armed movement forces in April and May. Having

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extended its unilateral ceasefire in January 2017 for a further six-month period, the Government did not relaunch its counter-insurgency campaign against the significantly weakened Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) in Jebel Marra this year. The Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) clashed with government forces in North and East Darfur.

4. Following military losses at the hands of the forces of the Government of the Sudan in Darfur in 2014 and 2015, as reported by the Panel of Experts on the Sudan (see S/2017/22), SLA/MM and JEM have maintained a presence and involvement in the conflicts in Libya and South Sudan. On 20 May, SLA/MM, with elements of the Sudan Liberation Army/Transitional Council (SLA/TC), a splinter faction of SLA/AW reported to have established tactical cooperation with SLA/MM, clashed with the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces in North and East Darfur for the first time in three years.

5. In North Darfur, on 20 May, SLA/MM and SLA/TC elements on board 280 gun-mounted and utility vehicles were intercepted by quickly mobilized SAF and Rapid Support Forces in Musbat and Wadi Howar (Furawiyah), approximately 60 km north-east and 120 km north of Umm Barru, North Darfur, near the border with Chad. Unable to sustain operations against government forces, the majority of armed movement elements were reportedly forced to retreat to Chad and Libya by 22 May. On 28 and 29 May, Government and SLA/MM forces also clashed in Ayn Sero, 30 km north-west of Kutum, North Darfur, reportedly resulting in at least three civilian fatalities, four incidents of rape, burning and looting of villages and civilian displacement. The Mission is verifying these reports.

6. Concurrently, in East Darfur, on 20 May, SLA/MM and SLA/TC forces on board 80 vehicles clashed with Sudanese Armed Forces in Sharaya, 70 km west of Ed Daein, East Darfur, resulting in the deaths of five Sudanese Armed Forces soldiers and an unconfirmed number of rebels. Further clashes were reported near the Adoula mountains and Arto Bargo, 25 km south and 16 km south-east of Shearia, respectively, on 21 and 22 May, resulting in the deaths of seven SLA/MM fighters and one Sudanese Armed Forces soldier. On 21 May, 15 men identifying themselves as SLA/MM members approached the Mission's team site in Muhajiryiah, East Darfur, and were subsequently arrested by Military Intelligence. By the end of 22 May, the Government confirmed that approximately 30-40 SLA/MM combatants with seven vehicles had managed to reach Jebel Marra via East Darfur. The majority of rebels, however, were reported to have retreated to South Sudan via Abu Jabra. UNAMID has received conflicting accounts of the total number of casualties in these incidents and has not received reports of civilians being affected.

7. The Government claimed to have captured at least 130 armed movement elements and 83 vehicles and confirmed the deaths of the Rapid Support Forces Deputy Commander, Colonel Hamdan al-Samih, during fighting in North Darfur. The SLA/TC commander and former SLA/AW deputy commander, Mohamed Adam Abdulsalam (Tarada) and several other SLA/MM and SLA/TC commanders, were also reportedly killed in the fighting. Government officials and the SLA/MM leadership exchanged public accusations with respect to the cause of the fighting and violations of their unilateral ceasefires, which JEM and SLA/MM had also renewed for six months on 3 May, and issued conflicting accounts regarding the impact. The Government accused the armed movements of launching a coordinated incursion from Libya and South Sudan into Darfur with the objective of undermining peace and stability and delaying the permanent revocation of United States Government sanctions which are scheduled for review in July 2017, as well as possibly re-establishing a military presence in the region after years of absence.

SLA/MM, in turn, claimed the fighting was caused by Government attacks on rebel-held areas, including through aerial bombardment in eastern Jebel Marra.

8. Meanwhile, as a result of the territorial losses suffered in 2016 and internal fracturing and defections, SLA/AW maintained only a limited military presence in the higher reaches of Jebel Marra in Killing, Boullay, Kibli, Bar Arie, Kalokitting, Kwila and Galol. Facing the closure of supply routes and logistical constraints, SLA/AW resorted to incursions and ambushes north of Kass, Deribat and Menawashei, South Darfur, areas in which government forces have not established full control. On 7 April, reportedly in search of supplies, SLA/AW ambushed a government police vehicle along the Keila-Al Malam road area between Menawashei and Deribat, killing two police officers and wounding one. On 7 May, according to local sources, Sudanese Armed Forces retaliated by attacking SLA/AW positions in Katti, Kurifal, Burro, Kadingo, Marra, Kwila, Boga and Barbara, within 20 km south and south-east of Guldo, Central Darfur. UNAMID was unable to verify the impact of the fighting owing to road conditions in the area.

9. Significant military setbacks over the past year and reported internal disagreements due to a lack of effective leadership on the ground resulted in further divisions within SLA/AW and the defection of its members. On 3 and 4 April, clashes between two groups within the movement were reported in Kaylah, 30 km north-west of Menawashei, resulting in the death of a local commander. On 14 April, the Governor of Central Darfur announced the signing of a peace agreement between the Government and a SLA/AW faction under the leadership of Abdel-Latif Abdel-Hamid in Zalingei, which was the third defection from the armed movement within six months.

Local conflicts and intercommunal violence

10. The reporting period, characterized by the ongoing migration season, witnessed 11 intercommunal security incidents resulting in 88 fatalities compared with 8 incidents and 45 fatalities during the previous period. The most significant clashes took place between Arab tribes over access to limited resources such as grazing pastures and water along migration routes. State and locality-level authorities, native administrations and community leaders, with the support of UNAMID, took expedient action to maintain security, mediate between the communities and initiate reconciliation processes. Such measures, many of which have been implemented since mid-2015, contributed to a decrease in the number of fatalities as compared with two years ago, which saw 278. Nonetheless, the sustainability of reconciliation and peace agreements remained a significant challenge in the absence of progress in resolving underlying issues over land ownership.

11. Two of the conflicts involved Salamat, a nomadic community without recognized land rights and competing over resources with Misseriya in Central Darfur, and Habbaniya and Ta'aisha in South Darfur. In South Darfur, fighting between Salamat and Habbaniya over the sharing of migration routes led to 28 deaths. Following a cattle-rustling incident, on 29 April, Salamat launched an attack on the Habbaniya village of Um Sial, west of Buram, to recover the stolen animals, to which Habbaniya responded in Nadeif on 8 May and in Sakhara on 10 May, west and south-west of Buram. Following the engagement of the State-level mediation committee, community leaders and UNAMID on 12 May in the presence of the Governor of South Darfur, the two communities agreed to cease hostilities and to convene a reconciliation conference in August 2017. The conference is expected to build on the previous agreement of 2009, which did not fully address the issue of land ownership and access in Al Nadeif.

12. In Central Darfur, following a cattle-rustling incident, Salamat and Misseriya clashed near Kabar, north of Um Dukhun, on 9 April, resulting in three fatalities. Despite Government efforts to stabilize the security situation, clashes over cattle-rustling and other crimes ensued in Umm Sory, south of Um Dukhun, on 16 May; in Magula, north-east of Um Dukhun, on 17 May; in Bir Bagara and Mogali, west of Bindisi, on 19 May; in Sure, north-east of Um Dukhun, on 20 May; in Murraya, east of Um Dukhun, on 21 May; and Salayle, south of Kabar, on 22 May. A total of 15 Misseriya and 24 Salamat were killed, with reports that the Misseriya burned down 10 Salamat-inhabited villages and that 716 households were displaced to Um Dukhun. Government forces reinforced their presence in the area, and the two communities agreed to cease hostilities at a meeting in Um Dukhun on 27 May. Meanwhile, a peaceful co-existence committee engaged both sides with a view to initiating a reconciliation process.

13. In East Darfur, tensions between Ma'aliya and Southern Rizeigat persisted. No further progress was reported in efforts to resolve their dispute over the ownership of land and oil in Abu Karinka and Adilla localities, with Ma'aliya maintaining their rejection of the draft Marawie agreement presented to the parties by the Government in 2015 and which grants land rights to the Southern Rizeigat, as the framework for the process. In this context, a series of cattle-rustling-related criminal incidents resulted in 21 fatalities and threatened to reignite the conflict. On 9 April, five Southern Rizeigat and four Ma'aliya, as well as two Government soldiers, were killed during clashes in Sabah al-Nima, south-west of Abu Karinka. Further clashes took place in Sabah al-Nima on 18 April, and in Okus, north-east of Muhajiriyah, on 7 May, resulting in four Ma'aliya and three Southern Rizeigat fatalities. In an effort to maintain security, government forces enforced the buffer zone established by the State Government in the wake of the fighting in 2015. Government police investigated but failed to apprehend the perpetrators, while community leaders urged both sides to treat these incidents as crimes and not an escalation of the broader conflict.

Violence against IDPs

14. As compared with the previous reporting period, there was a decrease in reported violence against internally displaced persons, with 104 criminal incidents, resulting in 22 fatalities, compared with 249 incidents and 31 fatalities previously. These crimes included violent attacks against internally displaced persons in or near camps and gathering sites, the killing of women and children, sexual and gender-based violence and abductions. Most often, the perpetrators were members of armed militias, the Rapid Support Forces, Border Guards and organized criminal groups.

15. Internally displaced persons were most vulnerable in Kutum, Tawilah, Korma, Kabkabiyah and Sortony in North Darfur, El Geneina and Kereinik in West Darfur, Zalingei and Nertiti in Central Darfur, and Nyala and Bulayl in South Darfur. In the North and Straha internally displaced person camps in Nertiti and Rwanda internally displaced person camp in Tawilah, internally displaced persons reported that attacks and harassment by armed men prevented them from farming in the area. At Otash camp in Nyala, criminality and attacks against internally displaced persons, especially women and girls, despite the presence of Government police in the camp, were reported.

16. In Sortony, North Darfur, despite the signing of a peace agreement with the Government in January 2017, the presence of former SLA/AW elements under the leadership of "General" Sadiq at the gathering site raised tensions with Fur internally displaced persons. The former rebels were reportedly engaged in the forcible recruitment of internally displaced person youth and attacks and harassment of internally displaced persons, calling for their return to their places of origin. On

22 March, the former rebels abducted two internally displaced persons from the site. They were subsequently released on 30 March following the intervention of UNAMID. On 27 April, the former rebels also clashed with Arab nomads over access to the Kube water point, north-west of the gathering site, resulting in the deaths of three nomads and one former rebel. SAF deployed reinforcements and facilitated an agreement between the two communities over access to the water point. The Government has yet, however, to ensure the removal of the former rebels from the internally displaced person gathering site and integrate them into the armed forces as stipulated in the agreement.

Crime and banditry

17. A total of 239 criminal incidents and 60 fatalities were recorded, compared with 673 criminal incidents and 106 fatalities during the previous period. The decrease is attributable to several Government security measures, including the increased use of Rapid Support Forces capacity to combat crime, the banning of the use of non-registered motorcycles, the use of facemasks and the carrying of arms by civilians. Incidents included assault and harassment (52 cases), shooting (30), murder (30), armed robbery (18), livestock theft (12), abductions (8), burglaries and break-ins (4), attempted robberies (4), attacks and ambushes (2) and other incidents (2).

18. Armed militia remained a threat to Government military and police personnel, with four incidents recorded, as was the also case during the previous period. In East Darfur, following an attempt to arrest an armed motorcyclist in Donki Kamal, west of El Daein, Government security personnel clashed with Rizeigat militia from 24 to 26 March, resulting in 15 security personnel fatalities and nine injured, including two civilians. In Central Darfur, following an ambush on the convoy of a locality commissioner in Chad earlier that day, Rizeigat militia, alleged members of Rapid Support Forces, clashed with Chadian security forces and Misseriya in Gaiya, west of Bindisi, Central Darfur, on 25 March. The fighting resulted in the deaths of four members of the Chadian troops and two Misseriya. On 14 May, armed Rizeigat clashed with South Sudan security forces along the border at Tuhama in Bahr al-Arab, East Darfur, reportedly resulting in 20 casualties among the security forces.

III. Political developments

Darfur peace process

19. During the reporting period, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP)-led mediation, supported by UNAMID and regional stakeholders, continued with efforts to convince the parties in Darfur to agree to a formal cessation of hostilities as a first step towards a political settlement of the conflict. However, further delays to the process by the armed movements in order to avoid a binding agreement, coupled with the Government's increased confidence due to its military dominance on the ground, have prevented any tangible results.

20. From 6 to 9 April, AUHIP, led by former President Thabo Mbeki, visited Khartoum and engaged with government officials and the Sudan-based opposition on the way forward in the talks on the cessation of hostilities and on ensuring an inclusive national dialogue. Citing the conclusion of the national dialogue process in October 2016, Government officials expressed the view that the negotiations should now focus solely on convincing those outside the process, in particular the Sudan Call coalition, to accept its outcome and join the Government of National Unity. The Sudan Call, in turn, highlighted the need for a meeting of the coalition to

adopt a unified position on the implementation of the Roadmap Agreement for Ending the Conflicts in Sudan, of 2016.

21. Given the deadlock, on 9 April, AU/HIP announced plans to hold consultations with opposition groups in Addis Ababa, to be followed by a meeting between the opposition and the National Dialogue High Implementation Committee, as the basis for determining the next steps in the peace process. On 11 April, the Sudan Call rejected discussion on the national dialogue prior to the conclusion of the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access agreements in Darfur and the Two Areas in accordance with the Roadmap Agreement. On 7 May, SLA/MM issued a press release calling for a new peace process which would address the root causes of the conflict and provide for greater participation of the European Union and countries neighbouring Sudan.

22. In the absence of progress in determining the next steps in the negotiations, on 18 and 19 May, the Government, JEM and SLA/MM held informal consultations in Berlin, facilitated by the Government of Germany, to discuss their main point of disagreement, namely the use of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as the framework for future talks. Notwithstanding the lack of a breakthrough, the parties committed to maintain dialogue. Meanwhile, according to media, SLA/AW, which remained outside the peace process, declined the invitation to Berlin and reiterated its rejection of any negotiations with the Government prior to the improvement of security conditions in Darfur, the disarmament of militias and compensation for internally displaced persons.

National dialogue

23. In line with the outcome of the national dialogue, on 11 May, the Prime Minister, Bakri Hassan Saleh, who was appointed by the President, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, in March 2017, announced the formation of a new government of national unity. The new government is composed of 31 ministers and 44 state ministers and has a mandate until 2020 to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the national dialogue, which concluded in October 2016, including constitutional and economic reforms and national reconciliation. The number of ruling National Congress Party posts at the ministerial level was reduced from 18 to 12 (58 to 39 per cent) to accommodate the other participating groups. At the level of state ministries, the number of National Congress Party ministers was reduced from 23 to 17 (64 to 38 per cent). President al-Bashir also appointed 65 new members of the National Assembly representing the participants of the national dialogue, increasing the size of the legislature from 426 to 491 and decreasing the majority of the National Congress Party in the chamber from 83 to 65.8 per cent.

24. Two out of four federal ministers from Darfur, Bahar Idriss Abu Garda and Ahmed Babiker Nihar, retained their positions as, respectively, Minister of Health and Minister of Labour and Administrative Reforms. Leadership in two further ministries changed hands between officials from Darfur, with Abdul Karim Musa replacing Hayder Galokoma Ateim as Minister of Youth and Sports, and Bushara Aru replacing Musa Tebin Musa as Minister of Animal Resources. Mohamed Abdel Rahman Hassabo maintained his position as Vice-President, while Tijani al-Sisi, former chairperson of the Darfur Regional Authority, is no longer part of the Government. At the level of State Ministers, Darfuris retained their roles in the Ministries of the Presidency and Industry and the Council of Ministers, and gained representation in the Ministries of Decentralization and Transport.

25. Non-participating opposition groups, including members of the Sudan Call Coalition, denounced the formation of the new government in the absence of constitutional reform and in the context of the current political and human rights

environment. The National Umma Party stated that opposition participants had forsaken meaningful national reforms in exchange for government positions and the status quo. On 3 May, despite calls from participating opposition parties such as the Popular Congress Party for the completion of constitutional reforms prior to the formation of the new government, President al-Bashir extended the mandate of the commission tasked with leading this process for an additional year in order to complete its task. Disagreements were also reported between the National Congress Party and participating opposition parties prior to the decision of the National Assembly on 24 April to maintain the arresting and emergency powers of the National Intelligence and Security Services and to remove amendment proposals pertaining to fundamental freedoms.

IV. Humanitarian situation

26. In the past three months, humanitarian partners have verified 8,048 individuals newly displaced in Darfur during 2017. This included 7,554 individuals displaced as a result of intercommunal fighting in East Darfur to El Lait, North Darfur, in February and March, and 494 individuals displaced from central Jebel Marra to Hasahisa camp in Zalingei, Central Darfur, in January. In the absence of major armed hostilities during the current dry season, there was a significant decrease in displacement as compared with previous years, including 2016, during which approximately 158,000 people were newly displaced. The level of displacement following the fighting between government and rebel forces in May is currently being verified.

27. In April, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) resumed the verification of displaced persons in Tawilah and Sortony, North Darfur, which had been delayed by Government restrictions since February 2016. IOM also registered 10,229 new returnees in April, including 4,385 in Otash village, South Darfur, mainly from the Otash internally displaced person camp, and 5,844 returnees registered in nine localities in North Darfur, mainly from Chad and other locations in North Darfur. Water shortage remained a concern in Sortony during the dry season as boreholes had dried up owing to lower water tables. Elsewhere in Darfur, an estimated 3 million people, including 2.1 million internally displaced persons, remained in need of assistance.

V. Operating environment

Attacks and restrictions of movement on and denials of access to the Mission

28. During the reporting period, the level of security incidents affecting United Nations personnel and property decreased, with 18 criminal incidents recorded, compared with 50 in the previous period. These incidents included break-ins and theft (2), trespassing (2), carjacking (3), attempted carjacking (2), property damage (2), shooting (3) and other incidents (4). On 20 and 30 April, Military Intelligence detained three peacekeepers for allegedly taking pictures of the local SAF headquarters and being present in a restricted military area. All three peacekeepers were released immediately. On 28 May, a UNAMID national staff member was arrested by the National Intelligence and Security Services in Ed Daein for alleged corruption, while the Mission's national staff members arrested on 23 November 2016 remain in custody in Khartoum without charges.

29. On 31 May, unidentified armed gunmen carjacked a UNAMID vehicle with two peacekeepers in Nyala, South Darfur, killing one of them. The perpetrators fled the scene with the vehicle. The incident was the first UNAMID fatality since March

2016, and followed two similar carjacking incidents against humanitarian actors in the Nyala area in April and May 2017, as described below. UNAMID urged the Sudanese authorities to swiftly apprehend the perpetrators. The decrease in armed hostilities during the reporting period witnessed a corresponding decrease in restrictions on the Mission's ground movement with 5 cases being reported, compared with 13 during the previous period. The Government, however, continued to restrict the Mission's verification patrols to conflict-affected areas, including to Furawiyah, Musbat and Ayn Sero, North Darfur, in the aftermath of the recent fighting between forces of the Government of the Sudan and armed movement forces and in Buram, South Darfur, and Um Dukhun, Central Darfur, following clashes between Habbaniya and Salamat and Misseriya and Salamat, respectively. UNAMID did not experience any air movement restrictions, compared with 11 during the previous period. However, bureaucratic impediments challenged air mobility, including delays in the approval of flight schedules, prohibition of flights between team sites in different sectors and limits on air operation hours.

Access denials and restrictions imposed on humanitarian actors

30. With the issuance in December 2016 of new Government directives on humanitarian action, the operating environment has improved as compared with previous years. In addition to faster approval for movement within Darfur and fewer denials of access, humanitarian partners were also granted access to previously inaccessible areas such as Boori, Central Darfur, and Belle el Sereif, South Darfur. In April 2017, United Nations Humanitarian Air Service reactivated regular flights to Golo, Central Darfur, further facilitating the movement of humanitarian staff and supplies to the area. Needs assessment missions are being planned to Rockero, Central Darfur, and to Deribat, South Darfur, which has not been accessed since 2010, although both missions have been delayed due to security concerns. SLA/AW-held areas in Jebel Marra remained inaccessible. The inconsistent application of the new directives, however, has restricted travel clearance, approval of international non-governmental organizations' technical agreements, and the ability to select national implementing partners, and has resulted in frequent delays in the issuance of visas for humanitarian staff.

31. Humanitarian activities were also impacted owing to conditions of insecurity in certain areas. On 19 April, armed men carjacked an United Nations Humanitarian Air Service minibus driven by a national staff member in the Hay al-Muglis area of Nyala, South Darfur. The driver was released by the perpetrators on the Nyala-El Fasher road after being robbed of his personal belongings. On 3 May, armed men in military attire on board a Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle attempted to carjack a minibus belonging to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees near the World Food Programme warehouse in Nyala. The perpetrators fled the scene following the intervention of UNAMID troops escorting the vehicle. No casualties were reported.

Visas and customs clearances

32. The Government granted 292 visas for UNAMID, which included 132 for military and police personnel, 74 for contractors and 18 for international staff. As of 27 May, 476 visa requests submitted since January 2016 remained pending, including 155 for police, 104 for contractors, 85 for official visitors, 62 for military personnel, 58 for civilian staff and 10 for United Nations Volunteers. No additional visas were granted for the Human Rights Section, which has a vacancy rate of 46 per cent, while the overall vacancy rate for Mission civilian staff is 13 per cent, of which 6.5 per cent is attributable to pending visas.

33. The Sudanese authorities have released food ration containers progressively as they arrive at Port Sudan. However, customs clearances for 112 shipments (for the previous quarter, the number was 182) of contingent and United Nations-owned equipment remain pending, some since April 2015. These shipments include armoured personnel carriers and vehicles, communications and information technology equipment, generators, submersible pumps and spare parts for vehicles. The delays resulted in demurrage charges and other costs incurred by troop- and police-contributing countries associated with the inspection and repair of equipment. In addition, the Government has not granted the certificate of exemption from taxation for goods imported by sea in 2016. The request for the same certificate for 2017 was submitted on 7 November 2016 and is still pending approval.

VI. Mandate implementation

A. Support for an inclusive peace process

High-level mediation

34. In support of the AUHIP mediation, the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur engaged with the armed movements to seek their views on the way forward in the Darfur peace process and particularly with respect to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as the framework for further discussions. During their meeting with the Joint Special Representative in Paris on 1 May, the leadership of JEM and SLA/MM presented a document outlining procedural and substantive areas on which they would like to engage with the Government, the latter being a reiteration of their previous position with respect to the Doha Document, including the need to address the root causes and key consequences of the conflict. The Joint Special Representative called on JEM and SLA/MM to demonstrate goodwill with respect to the possible resumption of direct talks, after which the two armed movements extended their unilateral cessation of hostilities on 3 May. On 2 May in Paris, the Joint Special Representative also met with the leader of SLA/AW, who undertook to consider the possibility of joining the negotiations process.

Implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

35. Following the dissolution of the Darfur Regional Authority in September 2016, UNAMID engaged the Government of the Sudan on the need to complete the restructuring process necessary for the operation of the remaining five commissions and one fund of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. During the reporting period, the Government worked on drafting terms of reference and planning necessary budget and staffing allocations and reporting lines for those institutions. In April 2017, the Mission held consultations with State Governments on the status of the Doha Document for implementation. The consultations revealed that delays in the restructuring process have also delayed the work of the Voluntary Return and Resettlement Commission and the Darfur Land Commission, while the Justice, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund and the newly established Commission for the Development of Pastoralists and Nomads remained non-operational in Darfur.

36. On 14 May, in collaboration with the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNAMID launched a two-week demobilization process targeting 500 ex-combatants in El Geneina, West Darfur. Funding gaps delayed the provision of reintegration

assistance for 2,000 of the 5,738 ex-combatants who have been demobilized since 2014. On 10 April, the Mission signed memorandums of understanding with implementing partners for 21 community stabilization projects that will target 800 direct beneficiaries in East, West, North and Central Darfur and promote skills training, infrastructure development and livelihood and agricultural support.

37. Following a three-month delay owing to financial reporting issues in the previous phase, the roll-out of the remaining 10 locality consultations in the third phase of the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation resumed in East Darfur, in Bahr al-Arab, on 9 and 10 April, and El Ferdous, on 16 and 17 April, with approximately 200 local participants. Consultations were also held in Tawilah, on 16 and 17 May, and Kornoi, on 22 and 23 May, in North Darfur. Participants highlighted the need for basic services and infrastructure and the empowerment of women and children in efforts to resolve intercommunal conflict and selected participants for the next state-level round of consultations.

B. Protection of civilians

38. UNAMID commenced the roll-out of its refined protection of civilians strategy in mid-April. In order to enhance early warning and response capacity, UNAMID integrated field protection teams carried out 26 missions to remote locations in Central, North and West Darfur. The teams consulted with local communities and assessed current protection threats, which highlighted insecurity, particularly for women and girls undertaking livelihood activities, as well as the risk posed by small arms, tensions between farmers and pastoralists and crop destruction during the harvest season, and the limited capacity of local police to address these issues.

Provision of physical protection

39. UNAMID conducted a total of 22,519 patrols, including 8,572 short-range patrols, 520 long-range patrols and 2,639 night patrols, consisting of 5,868 visits to villages and 2,531 to camps for internally displaced persons. Police personnel conducted 7,385 patrols, including 3,499 confidence-building patrols to such camps and 3,886 patrols responding to security needs, in particular those of women and children engaged in livelihood activities such as firewood and water collection. UNAMID also conducted 453 joint patrols with 1,115 community policing volunteers in camps for internally displaced persons.

40. With the outbreak of clashes between Government and armed movement forces in mid-May, UNAMID deployed verification patrols to locations west of Um Baru (Tine and Kornoi), west of Kutum (Disa and Anka), and Musbat and Furawiya, North Darfur, to assess the situation and verify the impact on civilians. In East Darfur, UNAMID military and police patrols were deployed to Muhajiriyah, Shearia and Labado. UNAMID was not granted access to Ayn Sero, North Darfur, the area reportedly most affected by the fighting. UNAMID also implemented a contingency plan, in coordination with the United Nations country team, with particular emphasis on engaging the Sudanese authorities to allow the opening of a humanitarian corridor for displaced civilians from Ayn Sero to safe areas and to facilitate the pre-positioning of basic supplies. The Mission also engaged with the parties to immediately cease hostilities and the Government to treat all prisoners of war in accordance with international humanitarian law. In response to the intercommunal clashes in Buram, South Darfur, the Mission conducted a verification patrol and intensified regular patrols in, Buram and Nadeif areas in order to monitor the status of the cessation of hostilities between the communities.

41. The Mission provided round-the-clock protection for internally displaced persons at the Sortony gathering site and Tawilah camp in North Darfur and stepped up its confidence-building patrols in Nertiti, Central Darfur, Kalma and Kass, South Darfur, and Kabkabiyah, North Darfur, further to reports of attacks on and harassment of internally displaced persons. In Sortony, North Darfur, UNAMID advocated for the resolution of the disputes between Fur who had been internally displaced, former SLA/AW elements and Northern Rizeigat nomads. In this regard, the Mission facilitated the return of five community leaders from among the internally displaced persons who sought protection at the Mission's team site to the gathering site for internally displaced persons and engaged the Government, calling for the integration into government forces of the former rebels. UNAMID also engaged with internally displaced persons and nomads to ease tensions over access to the Kube water point and requested the Government's intervention to resolve the dispute over the security incidents which had occurred between them since May 2016 and for the opening of the Kabkabiyah-Sortony road, which remained blocked by the nomads.

Logistical and security support to humanitarian operations

42. UNAMID provided 364 round-trip escorts for United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and humanitarian partners, in support of the delivery and monitoring of humanitarian assistance and assessment missions, including 46 escorts by formed police units and the prepositioning of humanitarian assistance to the Mission team sites in anticipation of the rainy season. In addition, UNAMID provided regular armed escorts for the movement of humanitarian personnel between Sortony and Kabkabiyah, North Darfur.

Promoting a protective environment

43. UNAMID documented 82 new cases of human rights violations and abuses involving 124 victims, including 15 children, during the reporting period, compared with 181 cases involving 400 victims during the previous. UNAMID confirmed 60 cases involving 77 victims. The remaining 22 cases involving 47 victims could not be verified owing to various factors, including access restrictions. Violations of the right to life accounted for 24 cases involving 40 victims, and violations of the right to physical integrity accounted for 31 cases involving 52 victims. There were 17 reported cases of sexual violence in the form of rape and attempted rape involving 17 victims, including 13 children, of which 9 concerned sexual and gender-based violence, while 8 concerned conflict-related sexual violence. There were six cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention involving nine victims, and four abduction cases involving six victims. Of the 82 reported cases, 16 cases involving 22 victims were reportedly perpetrated by government security forces and associated groups. The remaining 66 cases, involving 108 victims, were allegedly perpetrated by unidentified armed men, some described by victims as being Arabs.

44. On 29 March and 29 April, respectively, the Mission engaged with the newly appointed Attorney-General and the new Director-General of Prisons and Reform, who pledged their support in strengthening the capacity of justice actors. In an effort to strengthen the juvenile justice system in Darfur, on 27 April, UNAMID and UNICEF completed a newly constructed family and child court in Zalingei, Central Darfur, in the context of quick-impact projects. The Mission monitored the trial by the Special Prosecutor for Darfur Crimes of two Arab defendants accused of the murder of Masalit and Tama tribesmen in incidents which took place in West Darfur on 24 November and 26 December 2016, respectively.

45. UNAMID conducted training on human rights, prison operations, community policing, criminal investigation and evidence collection, crowd-control management,

identification of explosive remnants of war and small arms and light weapons control and computer skills that benefited 268 male and 1 female government police officers. The Mission supported the establishment of nine security coordination forums in which the government police, UNAMID, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and community leaders exchanged information on protection needs. UNAMID also held 14 training courses on community policing, peer counselling, human rights and road safety awareness for 441 male and 196 female internally displaced person community policing volunteers and one workshop on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and sexual exploitation and abuse benefiting 36 male and 44 female internally displaced persons. UNAMID trained prosecutors and police investigators on investigation techniques and new prison officers on human rights and prison management.

46. The Mission raised awareness on child rights and child protection through sensitization campaigns and the provision of training to 1,353 local beneficiaries and 387 male and 966 female prison officials. Communities were also sensitized on the dangers of child labour, early marriage and unexploded ordnance. UNAMID supported the establishment of child protection committees in Habila, Al Riyadh, Al Khairant and Forobaranga localities, in West Darfur. On 16 March, the Mission launched an awareness-raising campaign in Habila against child recruitment and the use of child soldiers.

47. On 27 March, the United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, together with the Government of the Sudan, extended the Action Plan for the Protection of Children from Violations in Armed Conflict for six months, which will allow the completion of the identification and screening of children, complaint procedure for communities, and awareness-raising activities. As a follow-up to the meeting with JEM and SLA/MM in Geneva in November 2016, the Task Force co-chairs attended a workshop organized in Entebbe, Uganda, on 27 and 28 April, with the support of Sweden and Canada.

48. The Mission deployed explosive remnants of war disposal and risk education teams throughout Darfur with particular focus on newly accessed areas within and adjacent to Jebel Marra. The teams conducted general explosive hazard assessment and disposal operations in 98 villages throughout Darfur, resulting in the identification of 91 hazard areas and the destruction of 1,412 items of unexploded ordnance. UNAMID also delivered mine risk awareness training benefiting 43,002 individuals, including 24,828 adults and 18,174 children. The Mission assisted the Government with the disposal of 47,363 rounds of small arms ammunition in Sereif, North Darfur, and Tamar, Central Darfur. On 24 April, in Forobaranga, West Darfur, UNAMID, the National Mine Action Centre and the Governor of West Darfur celebrated the clearance of all reported explosive remnants of war in the locality, making it the first locality in Darfur to achieve this status.

49. In coordination with the Government and the United Nations country team, UNAMID worked on developing innovative and sustainable ways to facilitate the reintegration of returnees and create conducive conditions in their places of origin. For example, following the peace agreement signed between the communities in Shattaya, South Darfur, in August 2016, the Mission supported the re-establishment of security and rule of law institutions in the locality, with the construction of a local court, prosecutor's office and police stations, as well as livelihood projects for over 400 returnee families. On 6 May, the Deputy Joint Special Representative (Protection) and the Governor of South Darfur launched a livelihood community stabilization project in Shattaya.

50. During the reporting period, the Mission implemented 68 quick-impact projects and 26 community stabilization projects across Darfur, aimed at supporting

community-led, socioeconomic development and local governance structures. The projects ranged from ensuring access to water to training on the production of fuel-efficient stoves to allow internally displaced women to reduce the time spent collecting water and firewood.

C. Local conflict mediation

51. In accordance with its strategy to address intercommunal conflict, UNAMID implemented measures to prevent, mitigate and address the root causes of the fighting. As part of its conflict prevention efforts, UNAMID engaged with internally displaced persons and community leaders through community alert networks, confidence-building patrols and field assessment missions to assess key protection concerns particularly as they relate to the criminal activities of militia, including land occupation and the denial of access to farmland. In anticipation of the upcoming farming season, in collaboration with UNDP, UNAMID conducted dialogue forums between nomads and farmers in Habila, West Darfur, Mukjar and Um Dukhun, Central Darfur, and Kutum and Waha, North Darfur, at which were discussed the importance of adherence to rules governing migration and farming and for local and state Government support in this regard.

52. In order to contain the impact of ongoing conflicts, UNAMID deployed confidence-building patrols to Buram and Nadief, South Darfur, and Um Dukhun, Central Darfur. The Mission urged the Government to ensure security and support community leaders and native administrations in the cessation of hostilities and reconciliation processes. In Buram and Nadief, UNAMID facilitated the work of community advisory councils, resulting in the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement and agreement to initiate a reconciliation process between Habbaniya and Salamat. UNAMID engaged the South Darfur state government to undertake more long-term measures to sustain peace, such as enhancing the rule-of-law situation, disarmament and legislative reform on land management.

53. In East Darfur, while continuing to urge state authorities to move forward with the peace process between Ma'aliya and Southern Rizeigat, UNAMID supported the implementation of mechanisms which have, over the past year, successfully prevented a further escalation of conflict between the two sides. Specifically, the Mission engaged the authorities and community leaders to maintain the security buffer zone between the two communities, as both a security and early warning mechanism, to ensure that perpetrators of cattle-rustling are brought to justice and for the two communities to maintain their dialogue with respect to the resolution of and compensation for such crimes.

54. As part of its support to reconciliation efforts, on 15 May, in collaboration with the Governor of West Darfur, the Sultan of the Masalit and UNDP, UNAMID facilitated a conference on peaceful coexistence, the purpose of which was to discuss the status of community relations between Masalit and the various Arab communities that had given rise to the fighting in Umtajok, Mouli and Azerni in 2016. Participating communities called on the Government to undertake the necessary legislative reform to strengthen the role of native administrations, underlined the need for implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and social engagement between local communities. On 24 May, the Mission and the Kabkabiyah Prevention and Conflict Management Committee, led by community leaders, held a reconciliation meeting between Northern Rizeigat and Fur in Kabkabiyah, North Darfur, to discuss the situation in Sortony. As a possible first step towards resolving their dispute, the two sides agreed to establish a committee to determine compensation required for the killing of six Fur internally displaced persons in May 2016.

VII. Transfer of mandated tasks to the United Nations country team and exit strategy

A. Transfer of mandated tasks and cooperation with the United Nations country team

55. UNAMID and the United Nations country team are in the process of finalizing the Integrated Strategic Framework for 2017-2019. In accordance with the mandate of the Mission, the Framework priority areas will be durable solutions, the rule of law and restoration of State authority and peacebuilding for human security. It will also incorporate United Nations country team planning based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Humanitarian Response Plan.

56. During the period under review, the Government of Canada approved the allocation of funding of $961,391 to implement projects by UNAMID, UNDP and UNICEF under the Joint Programme for the Rule of Law and Human Rights in Darfur. Given the existing resource and capacity constraints of the United Nations country team, UNAMID, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and UNDP explored further areas of transition and opportunities for resource mobilization in the area of gender. The Mission's Gender Affairs Advisory Unit provided technical support to UN-Women and the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Sudan in the development of a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

B. Exit strategy

57. Further to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016) and the communiqués of the African Union Peace and Security Council of 13 June 2016 and 29 March 2017, the United Nations and the African Union engaged in discussions with the Government of the Sudan on the implementation of the UNAMID benchmarks as the basis of the exit strategy. During the most recent meeting of the Joint Working Group, held in Khartoum on 20 April, the African Union and the United Nations briefed the Government of the Sudan on the preliminary findings of the joint strategic review of UNAMID, which was conducted from 5 to 17 March 2017. On 22 May 2017, a strategic-level meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism was held in Khartoum during which the report of the meeting of the Joint Working Group held on 26 February 2017 was endorsed. The Tripartite Mechanism also took note of the recommendations of the AU-United Nations strategic review report (S/2017/437). The Government, the African Union and the United Nations further encouraged the technical-level meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism to resume its monthly meetings on operational issues, while the Government reiterated its commitment to work constructively with UNAMID in this regard, including through the early release of shipments, issuance of visas and provision of timely access.

VIII. Financial aspects

58. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/284, appropriated the amount of $1,039.6 million for the maintenance of UNAMID for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. As at 17 May 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to $81.7 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,613.5 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made

for the period up to 31 January 2017, while reimbursement for the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2016, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations

59. The situation in Darfur has evolved. For the first time in 14 years of conflict, the annual dry season witnessed only one major military confrontation between Government and armed movement forces. Noteworthy efforts have been made, particularly by State and local governments in Darfur, in cooperation with native administration and community leaders and with the support of UNAMID, to prevent and mitigate intercommunal conflict.

60. Despite these significant improvements, many of the crucial grievances that caused the conflict and its consequences still need to be addressed, together with their consequences. Civilians in Darfur remain exposed to attacks and harassment, human rights violations and abuses, and sexual and gender-based violence, committed by armed militia, government forces and armed movements, as well as intercommunal violence resulting primarily from unresolved disputes over land and other resources. The absence of conditions such as security, basic services and the resolution of land ownership disputes remains an obstacle to the voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons.

61. There is an urgent need for concrete progress on the conclusion of a formal cessation of hostilities agreement. While taking note of the recent positive discussions the armed movements held with the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur, Jeremiah Kingsley Mamabolo, in Paris and with the Government of the Sudan in Berlin, I urge the Government and armed movements to cease fighting and to recommit to their unilateral ceasefires, demonstrate the requisite goodwill and political vision and flexibility and move the negotiating process forward in accordance with the Roadmap Agreement of 2016 and within the framework of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. I further reiterate my call to the SLA/AW leadership to desist from any actions that could destabilize the situation in Darfur and to join the peace process without preconditions or further delay. I urge the Government and former SLA/AW factions that have signed peace agreements to abide by and implement their provisions, with a view to delivering the peace dividends expected by the people of Darfur.

62. The national dialogue process remains a unique platform for the Sudan to address its internal political challenges. I take note of the progress made in the implementation of its recommendations and the establishment of the national unity government. I call upon the Government and the opposition to continue with efforts towards achieving the compromises necessary to ensure that this important process is fully inclusive and reflects the views and desires of all Sudanese citizens.

63. The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur is central to our joint efforts to achieve long-term and sustainable solutions for the Darfur conflict. It is therefore necessary to move forward with the implementation of its provisions, in particular those relating to the root causes and consequences of the conflict on issues such as land, the disarmament of militias, reconciliation and accountability and the return of internally displaced persons. UNAMID stands ready to support the Government of the Sudan in taking the necessary steps to ensure the effective functioning of the remaining Doha Document for Peace in Darfur institutions. I further call upon the Government of the Sudan to accelerate its efforts to ensure the effective presence of law enforcement and judicial institutions throughout Darfur and to honour its responsibility to disarm all militias.

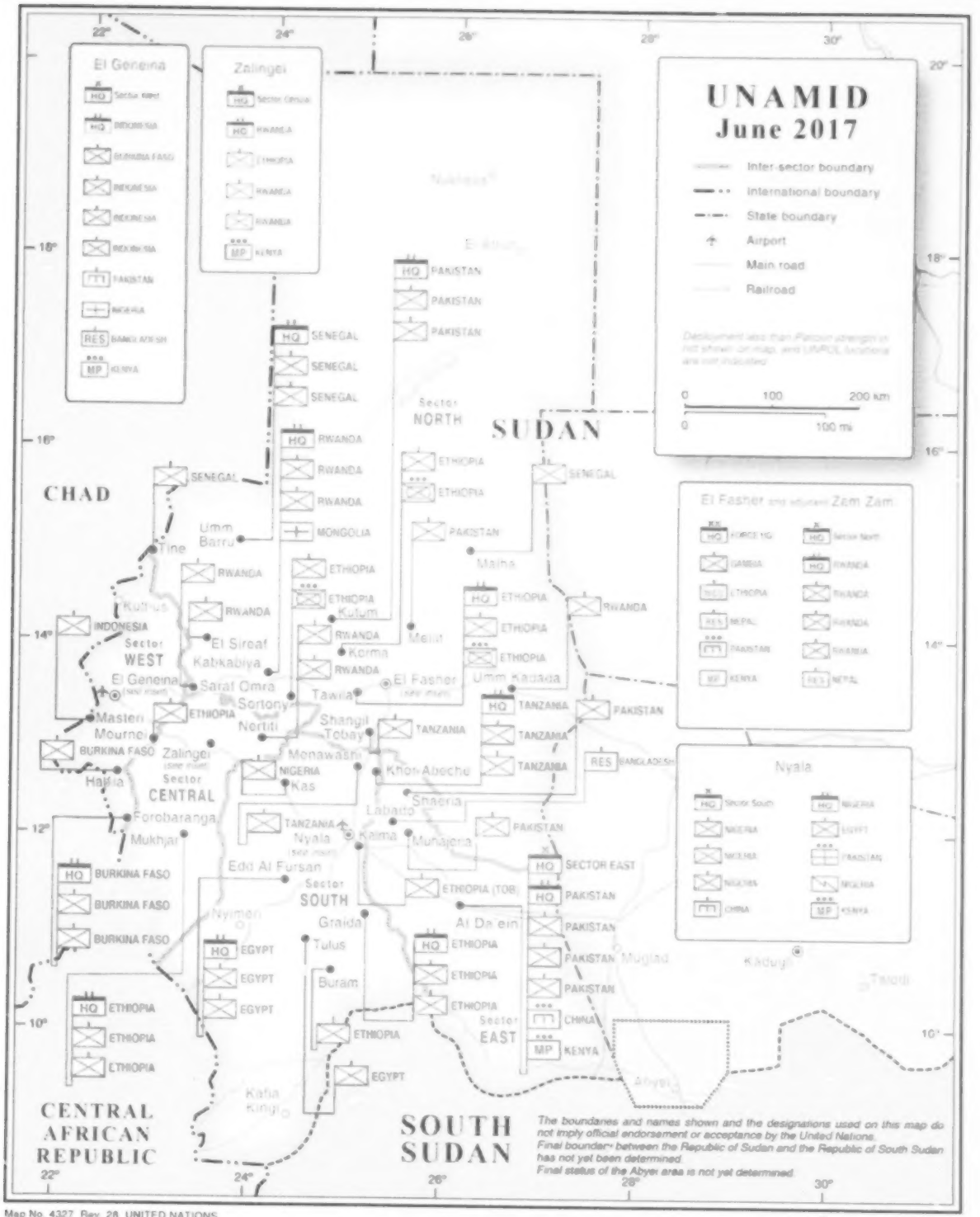
64. The significant decrease in the rate of new displacement in 2017 is a positive development. A total of 2.7 million people, however, remain displaced in Darfur, with another 300,000 refugees in Chad. UNAMID, as well as the United Nations country team, are committed to working with the Darfur state governments on developing comprehensive peace stabilization plans for local areas that are most important for the creation of durable solutions for displaced populations, and to support the Government in creating conditions conducive to the reduction of abuses against the civilian population. In this context, I would join the call of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, as expressed in its 673rd meeting, on 29 March 2017, for the international community to continue to provide much-needed support, with a view to alleviating the dire situation faced by the vulnerable and affected populations in Darfur.

65. I welcome the positive discussions held in the past three months among the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations on an exit strategy for UNAMID. Together with our partners in the African Union, we will continue to work closely with the Government of the Sudan on the implementation of this process, on the basis of the mandate of the Mission and benchmarks as defined by the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

66. In maintaining this spirit of cooperation, I call upon the Government of the Sudan to work with the Mission to fully abide by its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement and remove all outstanding operational restrictions on effective mandate implementation, including through granting access to conflict areas, issuing visas for all substantive civilian staff, in particular human rights personnel, and providing customs clearance for military and police equipment at Port Sudan.

67. Since its deployment in 2007, UNAMID has contributed greatly to the stabilization of the security situation in Darfur and the protection of civilians. In the context of rapidly changing circumstances in Darfur, however, it is necessary for the Mission to adjust to the current needs on the ground. I would therefore reiterate the recommendations for the reconfiguration of UNAMID as presented in my joint report of 18 May 2017 with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (S/2017/437), including with respect to the extension of the mandate of UNAMID for a further 12 months.

68. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur and Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator, Mr. Mamabolo, the Mission leadership and all the personnel of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners who continue to work tirelessly towards the pursuit of sustainable peace in Darfur in often very difficult conditions. I also wish to commend my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, and former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Abdulsalami Abubakar of AUHIP for their steadfast commitment to sustainable peace and stability in the Sudan.



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